

requirements, coordinate with teacher activities under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act, and ensure that current and future teachers are highly qualified. Authorized grant activities will place a renewed emphasis on the skills needed to meet the highly qualified standard: the use of advanced technology in the classroom, rigorous academic content knowledge, scientifically based research, and challenging state student academic content standards. In particular, states are authorized to use grant funds for innovative methods for teacher preparation programs, such as charter colleges of education, that exchange flexibility in meeting state requirements for institutional commitments to produce results-based outcomes for teacher education graduates—measured based on increased student academic achievement.

The Ready to Teach Act authorizes partnership grants to enable effective partners to join together, combining strengths and resources to train highly qualified teachers and achieve success in the classroom. These partnerships will require faculty of participating teacher preparation programs to serve with a highly qualified teacher in the classroom, allowing effective in-class experience to ensure that highly qualified teachers are truly prepared to teach.

Teacher recruitment grants under the Act will help bring high quality individuals into teacher preparation programs and gives a funding priority for applicants that will emphasize measures to recruit minorities into the teaching profession, providing a teaching workforce that is both highly qualified and diverse.

The Ready to Teach Act will also hold teacher preparation programs accountable for preparing highly qualified teachers. While current higher education law contains annual reporting requirements, these reporting measures have proven ineffective in measuring the true quality of teacher preparation programs. In fact, the current requirements have often been manipulated, leaving data skewed and often irrelevant. The Ready to Teach Act includes accountability provisions that will strengthen reporting measures and hold teacher preparation programs accountable for providing accurate and useful information.

This bill makes needed reforms to improve the quality and accountability of our nation's teacher preparation programs. I would like to commend Mr. Gingrey for his work on the Ready to Teach Act. I would also like to thank Mr. McKeon, Chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, for his continuing efforts to improve all aspects of our country's higher education system. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and believe that this legislation will enjoy broad support in the Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE READY TO TEACH ACT OF 2003

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Ready to Teach Act of 2003 to reauthorize teacher quality provisions under Title II of the Higher Education Act through fis-

cal year 2008. The first in what will be a series of bills to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, the Ready to Teach Act seeks to meet the call of the No Child Left Behind Act to place a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by making improvements that will help ensure teacher training programs are producing well-prepared teachers to meet the needs of America's students.

The caliber of teacher education programs at institutions of higher education has come under increased scrutiny over the past several years. Among other things, teacher preparation programs have been criticized for providing prospective teachers with inadequate time to learn subject matter; for teaching a superficial curriculum; and for being unduly fragmented, with courses not linked to practice teaching and with education faculty isolated from their arts and sciences faculty colleagues.

Accordingly, the Ready to Teach Act authorizes competitively awarded grants to: (1) increase student academic achievement; (2) improve the quality of the current and future teaching force by improving the preparation of prospective teachers and enhancing professional development activities; (3) hold institutions of higher education accountable for preparing highly qualified teachers; (4) and recruit highly qualified individuals, including minorities and individuals from other occupations, into the teaching force. As in current law, funds for these grants will be distributed in the following manner: 45 percent of the funds are reserved for State grants; 45 percent of the funds are reserved for partnership grants; and 10 percent of the funds are reserved for teacher recruitment grants.

State grants under the Act must be used to reform teacher preparation requirements, coordinate with teacher activities under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act, and ensure that current and future teachers are highly qualified. Programs administered through state grants would focus on effective teacher preparation, placing a renewed emphasis on the skills needed to meet the highly qualified standard: the use of advanced technology in the classroom, rigorous academic content knowledge, scientifically based research, and challenging state student academic content standards.

In addition, states are authorized to use grant funds for innovative methods for teacher preparation programs, such as charter colleges of education, which can provide an alternative gateway for teachers to become highly qualified. Teacher advancement and retention initiatives will also be created, such as merit-based performance systems and professional growth opportunities. These activities will help ensure that schools are able to recruit highly qualified teachers while having the necessary flexibility to remove incompetent or unqualified teachers.

The Ready to Teach Act authorizes partnership grants so educational entities can combine expertise and resources to improve teacher training. Each eligible partnership must include at least: (1) a high quality teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education; (2) a school of arts and sciences; (3) a high need LEA; and (4) a public or private educational organization. Among other things, partnership activities will help to ensure that teachers are able to use advanced technology effectively in the classroom, ad-

dress the needs of students with different learning styles (particularly students with disabilities), and receive training in methods of improving student behavior in the classroom.

Teacher recruitment grants under the Ready to Teach Act will help bring high quality individuals into teacher programs, and ultimately put more highly qualified teachers into classrooms. The Ready to Teach Act recognizes the need to ensure that high need local educational agencies are able to effectively recruit highly qualified teachers, and will help answer that need by increasing the number of teachers being trained. Additionally, this legislation places a priority on applicants that will emphasize measures to recruit minorities into the teaching profession.

Current law provisions in Title II of the Higher Education Act include annual reporting requirements to hold states and teacher preparation programs accountable for producing a competent teaching force. The Ready to Teach Act strengthens these reporting requirements to ensure complete and effective information is available to determine the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. Under this legislation:

States must report annually to the Secretary of Education on the percentage of students passing state certification or licensure and rank the quality of all teacher preparation programs in the state.

The Secretary of Education must analyze teacher qualifications and preparation in the United States, providing: a comparison of states' efforts to improve teaching quality; and the national mean and median scores on any standardized test that is used in 1 or more state for teacher certification or licensure.

Institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs must report on the number of students passing state certification requirements, with improved reporting requirements that will prevent "gaming" of data that leave results without meaning. Additionally, institutions must compare both pass rates and average scores of their program participants with those of other programs in the state, making effective comparison data available to measure program quality.

The Ready to Teach Act of 2003 will improve the quality and accountability of our nation's teacher preparation programs. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and look forward to working with the distinguished Chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, Mr. McKEON, and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. KILDEE, to move this bill so we can ensure our children are receiving a world class education.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HISPANIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague, Congressman CIRO RODRIGUEZ, in introducing the Hispanic Health Improvement Act of 2003.

Every 24 hours in this country, over 2,700 people are diagnosed with diabetes, just one of the multitude of diseases and illnesses plaguing our Nation. And of these 2,700 daily